LOVE YOUR LAUNDRY

Program your laundry space to save time, eliminate stress and make wash-day chores a breeze

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PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL

WHEN YOU CONSIDER how much time you spend washing, drying and ironing, it makes sense to create a laundry that's as user-friendly as possible. With a little careful planning, you can streamline your space to maximise its efficiency – whatever its size. Start by creating task-oriented zones: washing, drying, ironing and folding. "For a laundry to function and flow it's important to reassess everything in the space – if it doesn't belong there, move it!" says Tanya Lewis of Eco Organiser. >

'WH70F60WVI' 4.5-star WELS-rated, 3-star ERL-rated **washing machine**, $909, Fisher & Paykel.

wash wisely

Front loading washing machines are generally more energy-efficient than top loaders, and can be neatly tucked under a benchtop or a dryer can be hung above. "A 600mm washer is usually 6.5kg-7kg capacity, which is perfect for an average family household," says Anna Duncan, product manager for Fisher & Paykel. Washing large loads is most efficient, so buy the biggest machine you can fit in. If space is tight, try a combined washer/dryer – LG's latest model has a huge 8.5kg washing capacity.

Highly rated

Pay heed to water and energy ratings when buying a new machine – the water efficiency labelling and standards (WELS) scheme rates machines from one to six stars, as does the energy rating label (ERL): the higher the rating, the more efficient the appliance. "Some water-efficient washers are very energy inefficient. Some will have great water efficiency, but only 2.5 energy stars," says Anna. "The price of power is increasing and an efficient washer may cost you less in the long run." Look for programmable time settings; run it while you sleep as this is usually off-peak and can reduce your power bill.

Doing the dirty

A mounting pile of grubby clothes is the bane of laundries everywhere, but a few simple tricks will have the space spick and span. A compartmentalised hamper allows you to sort colours, whites and delicates as you go – if you don't have room for side-by-side hampers, opt for a three-drawer unit, such as the 'Polo' from Freedom, or stackable boxes. Built-in pull-out drawers eliminate the need for a bulky basket altogether.

Keep laundry powder and liquids within reach of the washing machine and sink and position according to how often you use each product. Howards Storage World stocks easy-build 'Elfa' shelving units that can be custom-fit to your space and storage requirements, then kitted out with detachable baskets and boxes to keep bottles tidy. The space under the sink is another storage hot spot: keep it organised by installing shelves around the plumbing with a product such as the 46-81cm expandable under-sink shelf ($49.95) from Howards Storage World, but if you're storing products down low, ensure you install a child lock to keep the contents away from little hands.

SHOPPING

'WDI4030FD6' 4.5-star WELS-rated, 4-star (washer) & 1.5-star (dryer) ERL-rated steam **washer/dryer**, $1999, LG.

'Mulig' **laundry bag** with stand, $24.99, Ikea.

'WFII04XAC' 4.5-star WELS-rated, 4-star ERL-rated 10kg front load **washer**, $1999, Samsung.

'Polo' 3-drawer **unit**, $79.95, Freedom, freedom.com.au.

'WAY32540AU' 5-star WELS-rated, 4-star ERL-rated 8kg front load **washing machine**, $2349, Bosch.

dry efficiently

PHOTOGRAPHY (OPPOSITE, LEFT) GAP INTERIORS/PATRIC JOHANSSON, (RIGHT) PHOTOSHOT/JEFF HERR/REDCOVER. (THIS PAGE) CRAIG WALL

Technology simply cannot better the warm-from-the-sun freshness of line-drying outdoors. The Hills Hoist first graced the Aussie backyard in 1945 and now comes in a range of sizes, shapes and colours. But the reality is, busy schedules and rainy days mean other options are often required. To avoid a towering pile of washing, look to a combination of indoor rails and a dryer.

Inside story

Indoors, hanging rails within cabinetry and wall or ceiling-mounted drying racks are a blessing during winter. If space allows, fix a drying rack directly above your dryer to make the most of the heat that rises from the machine during a cycle. A retractable clothesline that extends is another way to keep drying clothes contained in the laundry. Fold-away clothes airers are ideal for drying underwear and can be moved to catch the sun – look for one that fits inside the shower if your bathroom doubles as a laundry.

All things electric

If you need to dry your clothes in an instant, look for a tumble dryer with a high energy star rating. The latest dryers come equipped with technology to minimise creasing, such as the Miele 'T 8000 WP Supertronic Heat Pump' dryer. There are also models designed for laundries with little to no ventilation, such as the 'Condenser' dryer from Haier, with a drain-away hose and tank to store condensation.

An alternative is the electronic drying cabinet: the Asko model dries delicate and large items not suitable for tumble drying in under two hours. >

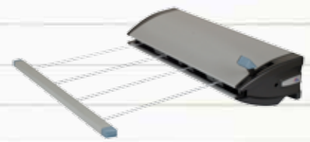
SHOPPING

'T 8000 WP Supertronic Heat Pump' 6-star ERL-rated 7kg **dryer**, $4699, Miele, miele.com.au.

'Portis' **drying rack**, $49.95, Ikea.

'HDY-C70' 1.5-star ERL-rated 7kg **condenser dryer**, $749, Haier.

'DC7573' **drying cabinet**, $1999, Asko, asko.com.au.



Hills 4-line extendable **clothesline**, $177, Masters, masters.com.au.

iron and fold with ease

Ironing will be less of a chore if you create a dedicated ironing and folding zone. Be sure to allocate plenty of benchspace for folding, and include a stereo or small television or favourite artwork. If you don't have space for a special nook, keep the ironing board and iron, clothes hangers and baskets for unironed and ironed clothes within easy reach of each other.

Space race

An over-the-door ironing board holder within the laundry cupboard saves on space, as do table ironing boards. Check out Hettich's 'WingLine' range for inconspicuous laundry storage options, such as pull-out ironing boards. If you don't have room for a workbench, consider fixing a narrow fold-out table to the wall. Asko's 'Hidden Helpers' range of laundry systems includes a thin pull-out shelf that can be positioned below the washing machine or dryer to provide a platform for unloading clothes. It slides into cabinetry or between appliances when not in use.

Iron clad

Assign a spot for the iron where it won't come into contact with water and position the ironing board close to a powerpoint so there's less chance of the cord catching and pulling the iron onto the floor. Iron technology has improved in leaps and bounds – the Philips 'PerfectCare' steam system offers a professional steam press tested by Woolmark that's suitable on silk and wool. hb

SHOPPING

'Solus Digital Resilium SR7000' **iron**, $129, Sunbeam.

'Raindrop' **iron board cover**, $29.95, Mozi.

'Willow' **baskets**, $45/set of 4, Masters.

'PerfectCare' **steam system**, $629.95, Philips.

'Jall' **table ironing board**, $9.99, Ikea.

Floral fabric **boxes**, $24.98/set of 3, Masters.

PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN DOWNS